RELATION OF CURRENT PLANS AND POSTURE TO PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS

1. Survival and endurance.

(a) The current force cannot survive in major strength under well-coordinated enemy attack without quick reaction to tactical warning which is ambiguous and unreliable. Only the small Polaris force can endure under prolonged attack, and no current protected capability exists to control it. (Airborne alert is a current potential, and preparation could extend the interval during which planes in the air on positive control could await commitment.)

(b) No current strategic plans provide for a strategic reserve under any circumstances of central war; all ready vehicles, including all Polaris missiles, are committed to attack pre-planned targets as soon as possible.

2. Strict positive control.

(a) There are currently no realistic procedures for the authorization of a strategic response by high national authority in the event of a surprise attack destroying Washington. All duly constituted officials authorized to assume succession as Commander-in-Chief are normally located in Washington. Even a moderate attack on the U.S. command and control system today would eliminate, with high confidence, the possibility of a U.S. authorized or even coordinated response.

(b) In the absence of realistic plans or convincing assurance that authorization for an appropriate response will be forthcoming, there is widespread acceptance of the notion that unauthorized "initiative" will be necessary, either at high military levels of command (which are almost as vulnerable as Washington) or at low. Both this attitude itself, and the reluctance to institute reliable safeguards against unauthorized action which follows from it, increase the possibility of unauthorized "initiative" in a time of crisis, under the stress of ambiguous indications and an outage of communications with higher command.

(c) Although there are physical safeguards against accident, there are almost none against unauthorized action, either in connection with individual vehicles or in command post operations. Such safeguards are technically possible; in principle, they take the form of a combination lock on weapons, requiring a code sent by higher authority to unsafe or release the weapon.

(d) Such safeguards are particularly important in connection with weapons under dual control with an Ally; current "protection", furnished by the Ally itself, serves to guard against "third party" action but furnishes minimum inhibition against unilateral action by Allied forces themselves.

(e) "Super-safing" both against accident and unauthorized action is required for weapons on high alert or mobile. Currently, weapons on high alert with Allied forces, nominally under dual control, not only lack such special precautions but are atypically accident-prone, not having been designed for such operation.

(f) It would be unacceptable to lower the risk of accident at the cost of markedly raising the risk of deliberate enemy attack; solutions to the problems of accident and unauthorized action should not afford an enemy the opportunity to paralyze U.S. response totally by attack on the command and control system. Although the design of explicit procedures for authorization under all circumstances raises complicated issues, such procedures could be both safer and more reliable than current tacit, ambiguous and uncontrolled understandings.

3. Information

(a) Current plans (prior to the President's Budget Message) do not call for bomb alarm read-outs at offensive force bases or subordinate command posts. Many units, particularly outside the ZI, might have outage of communications as their only immediate indication of enemy attack, and that would be highly ambiguous.

(b) The current design of the bomb alarm system, including means of transmission of signals, is such that a small number of bombs might put it out of operation. Thus, even though it had indicated that an attack involving "at least," say, four